

COURT BULLETIN

March 2016

Homeless Court Held at Shelter



Homeless Court Session at the Pine Street Inn: West Roxbury Division of the Boston Municipal Court's Chief Probation Officer Matthew McDonough and Clerk-Magistrate Sean Murphy take notes while First Justice Kathleen Coffey and Court Officer Christopher Lembo listen as Pine Street Inn Outreach Coordinator John Dempsey speaks about the steps taken by one Homeless Court defendant to find sobriety and get her life back on track. The special session meets at the Pine Street Inn once a month.

Providing Access to Justice for the Homeless. Homeless Court began holding sessions in 2010 under the leadership of Judge Coffey, First Justice of the West Roxbury Division of the Boston Municipal Court. The Homeless Court differs from other types of specialty courts in that the court goes to the people, running monthly sessions at Boston's Pine Street Inn and Lemuel Shattuck Hospital in Jamaica Plain.

A recent visit to the Homeless Court session at the Pine Street Inn illustrated how quickly people can slide into homelessness, and how difficult it can be for them to escape...

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Security Conducts Physical Assessment Test for

Court Officer Recruits



Court Officers Scott Gierlich of Eastern Hampshire District Court, Gary Levesque of Lawrence District Court and Bryant Mauer of Berkshire Juvenile Court get ready to proctor the first group of Court Officer recruits to take the Physical Assessment Test (PAT). Nearly 300 hopeful Court Officer candidates completed the seven-step obstacle course, which tests speed, agility, strength and endurance. The five sessions of testing were held in February and March at the Massachusetts State Police Barracks in New Braintree. Three more PATs will be held this fiscal year.

In case you missed it...

[Teamwork in Action: Creating a New Fitness Standard for Court Officers](#) (January 2016)

Lowell Drug Court Celebrates First Graduation



From left, Judge Mary Hogan Sullivan, Director of Specialty Courts for the District Court Department, District Court Chief Justice Paul Dawley, District Court Regional Administrative Justice Stacey Fortes, Lowell District Court Judge Ellen Caulo listen as Judge Thomas Brennan, acting First Justice of the Lowell District Court, congratulates the seven graduates from the intensive probation program. In the foreground are Lowell District Court Chief Probation Officer Steven Mastandrea and Assistant Clerk Samantha Larson. Several local police chiefs also attended the ceremony.

The February graduation ceremony, packed with family members and supporters, marked the Lowell Drug Court session's first group to successfully complete the program. The Drug Court held its first session in June 2014.

The court held a moment of silence for program participant Deborah Silvestri, who passed away last September.

Chief Justice Dawley told the graduates: "You have our respect, our admiration, and our support. We are in awe of what you've accomplished, and we commend the Drug Court team, the Bar, and the efforts of Judge Tom Brennan, who has made a positive difference in the lives of those in this community."

Other speakers included Middlesex County District Attorney Marian T. Ryan; Middlesex County Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian; Lowell Police Superintendent William Taylor, and Drug Court Coordinator Marie Burke.

The *Lowell Sun* covered the event: [Lowell Drug Court Turning Lives Around](#)

State's Caseload Reporting Jumps to Top Five in U.S.

The Court Statistics Committee, a joint project of the National Committee for State Courts (NCSC) and the national Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) recently highlighted Massachusetts for its improvements in reporting caseload statistics across the country. COSCA will publish 2014 data for all states this month.

Massachusetts increased the overall percentage of publishable case types from 9% for 2013 data to 80% for 2014 data, the biggest single year increase ever seen by the Court Statistics Project. This significant jump moved Massachusetts to the top five nationally in case reporting.

Kudos to the Trial Court Department of Research & Planning (DRAP), which compiles data and issues reports on a wide range of court and criminal justice issues.

"The court departments and Judiciary Information Services have been terrific in helping us improve the quality of reporting," said DRAP Director Linda Holt. "The completion of MassCourts has also proved essential."

Weekly and monthly reports on Massachusetts court activity are now posted regularly on the Trial Court intranet.

Court Administrator Harry Spence noted, "Posting these reports is an important way for court staff to see the value of the data they work on every day. The data they input has great value, and the quality of the thousands of daily data entries directly impacts the organization."

Learn more:

- [Trial Court Statistical Reports](#) (intranet - on Trial Court computers)
- [NCSC / COSCA - Court Statistics Project](#)

New: 20+ Liberty Interest Forms Now in 7 Languages

Expanding Access to Justice. The list of translated court forms available online continues to grow, thanks to the ongoing efforts of the Support Services Department and the Access to Justice Initiative.

This newest round of nearly two dozen translated forms includes high-priority, multi-departmental and department-level forms, with a focus on litigants' liberty interests.

Each form is available in seven languages: Spanish, Arabic, simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Russian, and Vietnamese.



Most of the forms are monolingual, which means that litigants must file the English form with the Court, but can refer to the form in their native language as a reference tool.

In an effort to make forms bilingual whenever possible, many of the forms have been redesigned as bilingual forms, with both English and a second language on the same form. The bilingual [Waiver of Rights](#), now used at the Superior Court, is an example of this new type of form. Bilingual forms can be filed with the Court.

The new forms are on the Judiciary's website: mass.gov/courts/language-access

Want to request a form translation? Support Services wants to hear from court staff about what forms you'd like to see translated. You can submit your translation requests online: mass.gov/courts/online-forms/translation-request-form.html

Next up: Signage. Support Services is translating text for standard courthouse signs such as "Court Service Center" or "Restrooms." The new signs will be installed gradually as part of overall courthouse renovations and improvements, and will include the languages used most often at

On the Hill...



Probation Officers testify on behalf of justice-involved women. From left (standing), Probation Commissioner Edward Dolan listens as Worcester District Court Probation Officer Kerry Coakley, Norfolk Juvenile Court Probation Officers Teresa Plante and Tracey Clougher, and Eastern Hampshire District Court Probation Officer Gina Sanderson address the Caucus of Women Legislators' Task Force on Justice-Involved Women. The Probation Officers spoke at the Statehouse about the programs and services available to female probationers, including Norfolk County's Triple P parenting skills program and Eastern Hampshire's Womanhood life skills program. Commissioner Dolan informed the Caucus that 22 percent of Probation's 82,000 supervised cases are women.

"We need to figure out the root causes of why these women get involved in prostitution, drug addiction, and trauma," said Probation Officer Coakley. "There's a considerable lack of sympathy and understanding in the criminal justice system for these women."

House Committee to Recommend FY2017 Budget

The House Ways and Means Committee is expected to release its budget recommendations on April 13. Once released, court leaders will review the Committee's recommendations for the Trial Court. Any amendments would be filed by a Representative and be due by April 15. The House will debate amendments later in April, and then vote on their recommended budget.

As reported in the Bulletin last month, the Governor recommended \$638.6 million to fund the Trial Court. The Trial Court had requested maintenance funding of \$654.4 million plus additional modules for other key projects. The Trial Court's FY2017 budget priorities are: \$2.8 million for specialty court expansion; \$4 million for security systems enhancements; \$1 million for Housing Court expansion; \$6.9 million for increased Probation Officer staffing, \$10 million for critical court facilities repairs and maintenance; and \$1.2 million to expand [HOPE/MORR](#) (Hawaii Opportunity

Probation with Enforcement / Massachusetts Offender Recidivism Reduction).

Court leaders continue to meet with legislators and others to advocate for court funding that will ensure the continued delivery of justice across the state. After the House votes on its budget, the Senate Ways and Means Committee will release its budget recommendations, and vote on the Senate budget in late May. Fiscal year 2017 begins July 1.

Fitchburg Office of Community Corrections Graduates 20



From left, Worcester County Sheriff Lewis Evangelidis presents a certificate to a graduate of the Office of Community Corrections Fitchburg program as Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale and District Court Judge Dennis Sargent (foreground, right) applaud.

The Office of Community Corrections (OCC), together with the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, the Massachusetts Parole Board, and local police departments, held a graduation ceremony for 20 OCC graduates from the Fitchburg, Leominster, Westborough and Ayer District Courts. Those attending the ceremony included District Court Judge Dennis Sargent; Vincent Lorenti, OCC Executive Director; Patricia Horne, OCC Deputy Director; and Elizabeth Daigneault, Supervisor of Probation Services for the Superior Court Department.

"These graduates represent the potential of enhanced supervision at the Community Correction Centers," said Mr. Lorenti. "They continue to work hard to achieve their goals and serve as powerful examples of how intensive probation supervision changes lives and makes communities stronger."

Among the graduates receiving special recognition for their efforts was Nicholas Bishop, who received a Hero Award for performing CPR on an overdose victim at a bus stop next to the OCC Center. His quick thinking saved the person's life before paramedics arrived.

On behalf of his fellow graduates, Ramsey Clayter said, "This program helps to change and ultimately save lives. The staff is committed to work with each one of us to help us reach our goals and achieve future success."

Read more: [The Sentinel & Enterprise covered the event](#)

A Vision for the Future: Creating Strategic Plan 2.0

Planning Teams Underway

By the end of March, the six planning teams announced on March 1 will have met and outlined their main areas of focus and defined the information they need to identify priorities for Trial Court Strategic Plan 2.0. The teams will be brainstorming, soliciting feedback, conducting interviews, surveys and meetings to seek input. They will also enlist the support of many who volunteered to assist the planning effort as part of the SLT's open engagement process. The meetings are working sessions to integrate the learnings from individual team members and smaller working groups, with the goal of drafting and preparing the tactical domains outlined in the Strategic Plan.

Teams are working on the following areas or "domains": Case flow Management, Next Generation Technology, The Judicial Experience, Organizational Decision-Making & Support, Talent & Career Development, Access to Justice & User Experience.

Each domain has two leaders and a project manager and brings together court personnel who volunteered to participate in this process. The teams will report their progress to the Strategy Leadership Team (SLT) on April 14 and make final recommendations on June 6. The aggressive timeframe lets the teams accomplish their work and report back to the SLT for feedback.

Members of the SLT who are not participating on a team are reviewing the Mission, Vision, and Goals developed for Strategic Plan 1.0 to determine if changes may be needed. See that report [here](#) for a reminder of those statements.

Please watch this space for further updates on the progress of the development of the new plan.

Read it:

- [Announcement of Strategic Plan 2.0](#) - December 2015
- [Invitation to participate in the planning process](#) - January 2016
- [Announcement of planning team members](#) - February 2016

Now Online: Jury Duty Video Series

Only on Mass.gov/courts... "Jury Duty: You Make a Difference," a 12-episode series designed to inform the public about how the jury system works in Massachusetts, is now online on the Jury Information homepage of mass.gov/courts. A Trial Court Innovation Grant funded the first season, which originally aired on the Boston Neighborhood Network. The video segments must be viewed from external computers to avoid any adverse impact on the Trial Court network.

Hosted by Michael Ryan, Communications Coordinator for the Office of Jury Commissioner, the first season covers jury service basics, and features interviews with Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Ralph Gants, Superior Court Judge Peter Lauriat, Chelsea District Court Judge Matthew Nestor, and others.

A second season will be posted soon on mass.gov/courts, and will include interviews with Superior Court Judge Robert Rufo, Chair of the Jury Management Advisory Committee; Housing Court Judge Jeffrey Winik, Access to Justice Coordinator Erika Rickard, and Sheriece Perry, Senior Manager of Support Services.

Why watch? "People ask me questions about about jury duty all the time--and most of the time they want to know how they can postpone or what to expect when they get to the courthouse," says Judge Rufo. "Watching the series will help Trial Court employees keep the public informed, and will enhance their knowledge of the Office of Jury Commissioner," adds Judge Rufo, who will discuss the new voir dire rules in his half-hour segment.

In Your Mailbox: Superior Court Judicial Evaluations for Middlesex, Suffolk Counties

What: If you work for the Superior Court in either Middlesex or Suffolk County, you can provide feedback to the judges with whom you work by completing the Judicial Education Program evaluation. To ensure that the process is completely anonymous, judges only see a summary of all survey data.

When: You should have received a questionnaire at your home address. Please complete your evaluations and mail them back as soon as possible.

Why: The scores you submit and the comments you write are taken seriously by the Trial Court. Each judge will meet with Superior Court Chief Justice Judith Fabricant to discuss the overall evaluations and professional development. Your survey responses and comments help enhance the performance of judges and the judiciary as a whole.

If you have any questions or need a questionnaire, contact Mona Hochberg, Coordinator of Judicial Performance Evaluation, at 617-557-1156 or Mona.Hochberg@sjc.state.ma.us.

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Coming Up in April: ELMO Center Introduces New Technologies; Court Leaders

**Testify on Governor's New Opioid Legislation; Norfolk Juvenile Court's
Programs Strengthen Families**